

## **Farmers Market Customer Survey Analysis and Conclusions**

### **Attendance At The Markets**

The Saturday and Tuesday markets have a high rate of weekly and 2-3 times per month attendance. The Wednesday and winter markets have more attendance on a monthly and less than monthly basis with the majority of respondents never using the markets. The Sunday market is primarily unattended and unknown. Most respondents don't attend or infrequently attend other farmers markets in the region.

### **Reasons People Shop Elsewhere**

The greatest barriers to shopping at the markets are buying local food elsewhere (CSA, farm stand, coop, etc.) at 52.4% and inconvenient days/hours at 31.3% and to a moderate degree lack of variety at 18.6%, too expensive at 15.6%, and prefer one-stop shopping at supermarkets at 13.8%.

### **Individual Market Satisfaction**

All markets generally had a high level of satisfaction. Areas of improvement could include:

1. Saturday market:
  - a. Number of vendors (39.5%)
  - b. Variety of dairy (41.3%)
  - c. Variety of prepared foods (39.6%)
  - d. Variety of fruit (28.9%)
  - e. Variety of meat (27.3%)
  - f. Variety of crafts (24.7% and entertainment (27.2%) although 64% and 61% respectively thought this was not applicable.
2. Tuesday market:
  - a. Variety of dairy (37.5%)
  - b. Number of vendors (30.8%)
  - c. Variety of prepared foods (27.1%) but 34% thought not applicable
  - d. Variety of fruit (25.2%)
  - e. Variety of meat (25%) but 40.3% thought not applicable
3. Wednesday market:
  - a. Variety of dairy (39.4%) but 46.5% thought not applicable
  - b. Variety of meat (33.6%) but 55% thought not applicable
  - c. Number of vendors (31.9%)
  - d. Variety of prepared foods (29.4%) but 51% thought not applicable
  - e. Variety of crafts (24.5%) but 66% thought not applicable
4. Saturday Winter Market:
  - a. Number of vendors (40.3%)
  - b. Variety of dairy (33.9%) but 49% thought not applicable
  - c. Variety of prepared foods (29%) but 53% thought not applicable
  - d. Variety of meat (26%) but 51% thought not applicable
  - e. Variety of fruit (25%) but 38% thought not applicable

### **Reasons for Shopping at Farmers Markets**

Top reasons for shopping at farmers markets are:

1. Desire to eat fresh/local food (90.9%)
2. Desire to support local agriculture (90.1%)
3. Desire to eat organic food (44.2%)
4. Enjoy socializing/sense of community (43.1%)

### **Shopping at Nearby Businesses when Shopping at Markets**

The majority of respondents also shop at nearby businesses when they shop at farmers markets – frequently (47%) and sometimes (40%).

### **Desirability Of Adjunct Features At The Markets**

The majority of respondents thought that adjunct features such as entertainment, arts/crafts, ready to eat and take home prepared foods, and ethnic products at the markets were somewhat desirable except that the availability of ethnic foods was also considered equally very desirable.

### **Average \$ Spent On A Trip To Farmers Market**

The majority of respondents spend \$10-\$25 per trip (67%) with 23% spending \$26-\$50.

### **How Customers Learn About The Markets**

Primarily by word of mouth (65%), happened upon the market (26%), and print advertising (24%).

### **Primary Places Where Customers Also Shop For Local/Organic Food**

1. River Valley Market Coop (74%)
2. Farm stands (65%)
3. Stop & Shop (50%)
4. Serios Market (46%)
5. Whole Foods (45%)
6. Trader Joe's (43%)
7. State Street Fruit and Cornucopia (36% each)

### **Average Customer Profile**

Middle age female Northampton resident between the ages 35-64 with no children and a household income in the \$25,000-\$75,000 range. Another 40% of respondents are in the \$75,000+ income range.

### **Written Comments**

The majority of written comments were related to:

1. Desire for more vendors, more variety of products and more hours of operation
2. More space at the Saturday Gothic Street market
3. More ways to learn about and remember the markets and vendors such as email newsletters, better marketing on hours/vendors/etc.
4. Desire for lower cost products generally and in comparison to other shopping options and desire to make locally grown foods available to lower income residents.
5. Appreciation for the distinct character of each of the markets and a strong support for keeping the markets in Northampton

6. Mixed desire for adjunct offerings like prepared foods, places to sit, entertainment to create more of a community event and those who thought the primary purpose of a market is to provide local/organic produce without the need for other amenities.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

1. Markets could benefit from additional marketing and outreach particularly the Wednesday, winter, and Sunday markets.
2. Suggestions for marketing/outreach –
  - a. Email newsletters with information about markets, vendors, hours, in season products as they come to market.
  - b. Online promotion with information about all the markets in Northampton – perhaps on the City, Chamber, CISA websites and social media sites.
  - c. Post hours of operation at the markets
  - d. Flyers or kitchen magnets with the market name and hours of operation to post at home or the office as a reminder
  - e. Improve the signage and visibility for markets
  - f. Joint/cross marketing and promotions with local businesses and the City
  - g. Use special events or new adjunct features at the markets as a way to grow the customer base and to draw people into downtown Northampton and Florence center.
  - h. Promote the availability of EBT card machines at the markets
3. Consider increasing the availability of dairy, meat, and prepared foods at all of the markets as a way to increase customers/sales and to respond to leading customer desires.
4. The farmers markets and the nearby local businesses benefit from each other and opportunities for collaboration should be explored. One way to do this might be to have local businesses provide prepared foods using locally grown/made products.
5. There is some desire for adjunct amenities and offerings at farmers markets although not the greatest priority including arts/crafts, locally prepared foods ready to eat and for take home, ethnically diverse products, and entertainment. Individual markets could explore which of these might be a good fit for their own markets and the Markets/City/Chamber/BID could explore joint events/promotions. This could build on one of the top expressed reasons for shopping at markets – enjoyment of socializing and sense of community.
6. Explore ways to expand the demographic profile of the average farmers market shopper to include families, ethnic groups, lower income residents, men, etc.
7. The City and the Saturday market should explore options to provide additional space for the market to relieve congestion and create space for additional vendors if desired by the market managers.
8. Evaluate the feasibility of a permanent pavilion/covered space downtown that can be shared by markets on different days and perhaps year round.
9. Explore options for training and technical assistance for markets (e.g. marketing, customer service, market analysis to help determine optimal number of vendors and markets).